

Nov. 2 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; King Abdullah II of Jordan; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Statement on the Cyclone in India

November 2, 1999

On behalf of all Americans, Hillary and I offer our deepest condolences to the families who lost loved ones to the devastating cyclone that struck eastern India Friday and Saturday. It is gradually becoming clear just how much destruction was wrought along the seacoast and inland in those terrifying hours. There are reports that thousands of lives were lost and hundreds of thousands of homes were destroyed. It is truly a national calamity.

Our hearts go out to the Indian people, and we are prepared to do what we can to help. The Government of India has an immense task ahead in providing assistance to the people who were affected by this tragedy. The United States Government is providing more than \$2 million worth of food and \$100,000 worth of tents and plastic sheeting to help alleviate the hunger and immediate suffering. I also encourage the American people to help through charities involved in international relief.

Statement on House Action on Proposed Legislation To Provide Assistance to African, Caribbean, and Central American Nations

November 2, 1999

Today's vote is an important milestone in our effort to build a new economic relationship with sub-Saharan Africa and deepen ties with our Caribbean and Central American neighbors. This legislation will help increase trade, enhance

opportunity, and boost economic growth in America and nations in Africa, the Caribbean, and Central America. I urge the Senate to pass this bill as soon as possible.

Statement on Senate Action on Appropriations Legislation for the District of Columbia and Labor, Health, and Education Programs

November 2, 1999

Today, by a narrow margin, Congress completed action on a deeply flawed spending bill that I will veto. This bill is a catalog of missed opportunities, misguided priorities, and mindless cuts. It forces America's schoolchildren to pay the price for Congress' failure to make responsible choices. I will not let it become law.

The bill, which includes the Labor/Health and Human Services/Education appropriations measure, makes a blind, across-the-board cut that will hurt everything from national defense to

veterans' programs, from education to the environment. It reneges on last year's bipartisan commitment to fund 100,000 teachers and reduce class size in the early grades, replacing this proven approach with a risky block grant that opens the door to private school vouchers. It fails to include a key accountability initiative to help turn around failing schools. And it short-changes many other priorities, including efforts to enhance worker safety, expand child care,

detect emerging infectious diseases, and protect Americans from the threat of bioterrorism.

This debate is not just about how much we spend but also how wisely we spend. I sent Congress a budget, for education, health care, and other programs, that invests in results and

is fully paid for. But Congress continues to pursue an agenda of irresponsible cuts and ill-conceived allocations. The patience of the American public is wearing thin. It is time for Congress to put aside partisanship and make the targeted investments our Nation's future demands.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters in Oslo

November 2, 1999

Middle East Peace Process

The President. I think I can speak for all of us when I say, first, we're very grateful to the Government of Norway for inviting us here for this important ceremony. And we now have to give some real energy to the framework talks, but I think even though the issues are difficult, the will is strong, and we're off to a good start.

Q. How do you see the strong focus, Mr. President, on the issue of the settlement?

The President. I think that the less we say now to the public and the more we work in private, the better off we'll be and the more likely we will be able to get an agreement.

Q. [Inaudible]—a summit in January or February in Washington, or maybe in Camp David?

The President. I wouldn't—I don't think we should rule it out or in. We ought to make sure—see how much progress we can make between now and then. You know, I would do anything I could to help them.

Q. What is the main issue you will discuss right now when you start negotiations?

The President. I think we just have to talk about—to get agreement on the ground rules, how we're going to proceed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the U.S. Ambassador's residence. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and an Exchange With Reporters in Oslo

November 2, 1999

Middle East Framework Agreement

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, we have just completed a very good meeting. I feel that we have revitalized the peace process, and we've got these final status—the framework talks off to a very good start.

The two sides have not only named their teams; they have agreed that the leaders will personally continue to meet on a regular basis. They have agreed to work very hard to avoid public comments or actions which will cause

enormous difficulty for the other side in the next 100 days or so when they're trying to come to agreement on the framework. And they have agreed with me that we might well have a summit at the end of this process if enough progress has been made to make us all believe that, in good faith, we can actually get an agreement at a summit.

Q. Is that the framework process, Mr. President?

The President. The framework process, yes.

Q. When will you have that summit?